Title: Need to provide duty-free kerosene for traditional fishing in Kerala.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (MAVELIKARA): The traditional fishermen belong to socially and economically backward communities in the State of Kerala. The single-most limiting factor governing the operational expenses for the traditional fishing operation is the cost of fuel required for operating Out Board Motors. The depletion of resources along the inshore waters has compelled traditional fishermen to venture into the deep seas in search of resources. Of the total fish catch, the contribution of traditional fisher folk is more than 70 per cent and contributes significantly to the foreign exchange earnings. About 14,300 nos. of kerosene based OBMs are being used by traditional fishermen who require about 1,39,300 Kls of kerosene per annum. The allocation to this sector from the State PDS is only around 57,500 Kls per annum. This huge gap between demand and supply in the section has resulted in black-marketing of kerosene and has trapped the poor fishermen in a vicious circle of indebtedness. Due to the recent increase in the price of kerosene there has been further erosion of net earnings of fishermen to the extent of Rs.10,000/- per annum amounting to a loss of one-third of their meagre annual income.

I request the Government to provide duty-free kerosene for traditional fishing in Kerala.